

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7579

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8497

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR KS JA

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH FONMIN ON ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS

1. DURING CALL ON FONMIN KIM TONG-CHO DECEMBER 20, AMBASSADOR CONVEYED IMPRESSION HE HAD GAINED DURING RECENT VISIT TO TOKYO THAT JAPANESE WERE INTERESTED IN IMPROVING ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS.

2. CITING DISCUSSION HE HAD HAD WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA AND WITH GAIMUSHO AND KEIDANREN OFFICIALS, AMBASSADOR SAID IT EVIDENT THAT MIKI GOVERNMENT WANTED TO "WIPE SLATE CLEAN" AND RESUME PRE-AUGUST 15 RELATIONSHIP WITH KOREA. IT WAS ALSO CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT JAPANESE WANTED ROKG TO PARTICIPATE IN STEPS TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE THE JAPANESE WANTED SOME FORMULA TO BE WORKED OUT WHICH WOULD HAVE ROKG ACKNOWLEDGE MORE EXPLICITLY THE ROLE OF ROK EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY IN KIDNAPPING OF KIM TAE-CHUNG. AMBASSADOR NOTED IN THIS REGARD THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE WELCOMED BY JAPANESE POLICE AND HELP THEM BE MORE COOPERATIVE WITH ROKG IN CONTROLLING CHOSEN SOREN.

3. FONMIN AGREED THAT RELATIONS WITH JAPAN COULD IMPROVE UNDER MIKI CABINET. WITH REGARD TO KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE HE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT MORE ROKG COULD

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DO SINCE IT HAD ALREADY FIRED YI HU-RAK AND SUSPENDED

ROK EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT
HE WAS NOT SUGGESTING ANY FORMULA BUT MERELY PASSING
ON HIS ASSESSMENT OF JAPANESE VIEWS.
SNEIDER

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